

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Sheriff - Coroner	(2) MEETING DATE 4/17/2012	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Ian Parkinson, Sheriff / Katie Perez, Gen. Services 781-4540	
(4) SUBJECT Request to approve a lease for property located at 835 Aerovista in San Luis Obispo in the amount of \$60,000 annually for use as the Coroner's Office and morgue and the use of \$30,000 from the Asset Forfeiture trust fund for the purchase of equipment in the facility.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION The Sheriff and General Services recommend your Board: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve and direct the Chair to sign the lease with Medport Inc. for improved office space located at 835 Aerovista in San Luis Obispo for use as a Coroner's office and morgue; 2. Approve the use of \$30,000 from the Sheriff's Office Asset Forfeiture trust fund for the purchase of equipment in the facility; 3. Amend the fixed asset list for leasehold improvements including a refrigeration unit and ventilation system; 4. Approve a corresponding budget adjustment in Fund Center 136-Sheriff-Coroner. A four fifths (4/5) vote of the board is required for all items.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) Asset Forfeiture Trust Funds General Funds	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$30,000 Asset Forfeiture \$10,000 General Fund	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$60,000 General Fund	(9) BUDGETED? FY 11-12 \$10,000 = Yes FY 12-13 cost = Yes
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Board Business (Time Est. _____)			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinances <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		(12) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: 1112002 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4/5th's Vote Required <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
(13) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(14) W-9 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
(15) LOCATION MAP Yes	(16) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No	(17) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A Date _____	
(18) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW Geoff O'Quest			
(19) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts -			

County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Sheriff - Coroner / Ian Parkinson 781-4540
General Services / Katie Perez 781-5200

DATE: 4/17/2012

SUBJECT: Request to approve a lease for property located at 835 Aerovista in San Luis Obispo in the amount of \$60,000 annually for use as the Coroner's Office and morgue and the use of \$30,000 from the Asset Forfeiture trust fund for the purchase of equipment in the facility.

RECOMMENDATION

The Sheriff and General Services recommend your Board:

1. Approve and direct the Chair to sign the lease with Medport Inc. for improved office space located at 835 Aerovista in San Luis Obispo for use as a Coroner's office and morgue;
2. Approve the use of \$30,000 from the Sheriff's Office Asset Forfeiture trust fund for the purchase of equipment in the facility;
3. Amend the fixed asset list for leasehold improvements including a refrigeration unit and ventilation system;
4. Approve a corresponding budget adjustment in Fund Center 136-Sheriff-Coroner.

A four fifths (4/5) vote of the board is required for all items.

DISCUSSION

The elected Sheriff-Coroner is responsible for all death investigations that occur within the County of San Luis Obispo. These responsibilities are found in the Government code and are defined as:

27491 Government Code- *"It shall be the duty of the **coroner** to inquire into and determine the circumstances, manner, and cause of all violent, sudden, or unusual deaths; unattended deaths; deaths where the deceased has not been attended by either a physician or a registered nurse, who is a member of a hospice care interdisciplinary team, as defined by subdivision (e) of Section 1746 of the Health and Safety Code in the 20 days before death.... In any case in which the **coroner** conducts an inquiry pursuant to this section, the **coroner** or a deputy shall personally sign the certificate of death."*

In order to determine the cause of death, many cases require an autopsy or medical examination. Autopsies are conducted by a certified Pathologist and a Deputy Coroner. The County contracts with a Pathologist from the Central Valley due to the lack of any local service. The autopsies are generally conducted once a week and are conducted at a local mortuary. The Sheriff's Office contracts with the mortuary for the use of their facility. The Sheriff's Office has three full-time Deputy Coroners. Last year, there were 1,441 reported deaths in the County of San Luis Obispo, which has steadily increased since 2002. Of those reported deaths, the Coroner's Office conducted 281 autopsies/medical examinations last year, or approximately 5 per week.

There are three significant problems with the current operation of the Coroner's Office: 1) safety, 2) efficiency, and 3) capacity or the ability to deal with major casualty.

While the preparation room at the current mortuary location that is utilized by the Coroner's Office for conducting autopsy examinations has served its purpose, there are several factors that necessitate a change. Issues of safety, efficiency and capacity must be addressed as the Sheriff's Office plans for the future. The Sheriff must address the needs for change in order to protect Sheriff's Office employees and to provide the best service to the citizens of San Luis Obispo County.

The current mortuary used for examinations is older and thus, does not have the infrastructure considered to be essential in a modern autopsy facility. The air handling system is not sufficient to meet the required air exchange rate necessary during autopsies and to protect the employees from embalming fumes used by the mortuary. The wastewater system is based on a septic tank system which becomes inundated during periods of heavy rainfall. The room surfaces are of older materials that are more difficult to clean and sterilize than more modern surfaces and does not ensure the uncontaminated collection of evidence, such as DNA. There is no separate area designated for personnel to change out of soiled autopsy protective clothing which leads to exposure of protected clothing to contaminated air and surfaces. The decedents are stored in a refrigeration unit at the mortuary and are only protected by tamper resistant evidence seals, which create concerns with ensuring the protection of evidence. The facility is wholly inadequate for any autopsy involving a potentially infectious or hazardous element.

The proposed facility will include design features that improve the ergonomics of the autopsy process and reduce the chance of injuries. A storage refrigerator at the facility will ensure two layers of evidence protection and will guarantee the chain of evidence and "law enforcement best practice." Features such as lifts, adjustable examination stations, improved dissection areas, an appropriate ventilation system, municipal sewer service, isolation areas and a protective clothing changing area will help reduce the chances for injury and illness.

Improved efficiency will also be realized with a facility that places administrative office space within the same facility where autopsies are performed. Current circumstances require Coroner Investigative Staff to drive approximately twenty minutes each direction to reach the mortuary where autopsies are performed. This time will be made available for job duty responsibilities rather than lost to driving. Another efficiency gain will be realized in the transportation of decedents to the autopsy facility for examination. If all decedents requiring examination were transported directly to a Coroner's Central Morgue Facility at the time of death, there will be no need to incur additional fees for transporting decedents to the mortuary currently used for autopsies. A central facility reduces the chance that delays will be created in awaiting the transportation of a particular decedent to the facility. This facility also has a reception area that will be used by the Coroners to meet with families.

Storage capacity for deceased persons within the County remains a constant concern. The current system of utilizing the private resources of mortuary providers within the county has worked under the day-to-day operations of the Coroner's Office. However, depending upon the volume of cases that those mortuary providers are handling/storing which lay outside the authority of the Coroner's Office, there are times that total storage capacity is strained. A mass fatality event could exhaust storage capacity and create the need for rapidly contrived storage solutions. The proposed Coroner's Central Morgue Facility will have adequate refrigerated storage and preplanned infrastructure for portable refrigerated storage units in anticipation of a mass fatality event and will resolve this concern. In addition, there are many times that an autopsy is conducted for a criminal case and storage and the chain of evidence will be improved with the storage being controlled by the Sheriff's Office.

835 Aerovista

The Sheriff's Office looked at several pieces of property that were located in the City of San Luis Obispo. A county centralized location was important to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the Coroner's Office. 835 Aerovista is located next to the airport in a commercial/ business park. The space is approximately 2,400 square feet and will be sufficient to meet the Coroner's Office space needs. The Lease before you is for a period of ten years, with one ten-year option to extend. The Lease begins May 1, 2012 and rent will begin upon completion of the tenant improvements. The monthly rental rate of \$5,000 equates to approximately \$2.05 per square foot Gross. The building owner has agreed to pay for the tenant improvements, except for the refrigeration unit and the specialized ventilation system. One of the main concerns and needs of the Coroner's Office for a building is having a private entrance that is predominantly out of the public view. This building offers that access. This building is a new building and the other tenants of the building are aware the Sheriff's Office plan for the space. This building meets all of the size, location and environmental needs of the Sheriff's Office.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT

The Real Property Management Office within the County General Services Agency (GSA) assisted with the preparation of this Lease. This Lease has been reviewed by County Counsel as to form and legal effect.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the current budget year, FY 2011-12, there is a small savings from the budgeted mortuary costs that will allow the Sheriff's Office to cover the cost of the new lease without a budget adjustment. No additional General Fund Support will be needed for FY 2011-12. In FY 2012-13, it is estimated that there will be an increase in General Fund support of approximately \$12,100 compared to the FY 2011-12 budgeted amounts, as follows:

FY 2011-12 Adopted Budget:

\$49,500 Mortuary contract
\$ 8,400 Autopsy clean up
\$57,900 Total FY 2011-12

FY 2012-13 Budget Request:

\$60,000 Rent
\$10,000 Transport services
\$70,000 Total FY 2012-13

The Sheriff's Office is also requesting to purchase the following with Asset Forfeiture Funds of \$30,000:

1. \$15,000 - Refrigeration Unit
2. \$15,000 - Ventilation System

RESULTS

Approval of this request will provide an increased efficiency, increased safety to employees and increased protection of evidence in criminal investigations. This action supports the County's desired community-wide results of A Safe Community.

ATTACHMENTS

Vicinity Map
Contract-Coroner's lease agreement